

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 IO-10 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01 CU-02 EB-07

AGR-05 SCA-01 EUR-12 /101 W
----- 072904

R 032155Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8970

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINSCO

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 0041

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MEXICO ADDED AS INFO ADDEE)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, HO

SUBJECT: GOH EXPULSION OF CHILEAN REFUGEES

1. A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 15 CHILEAN REFUGEES DEPARTED BY AIR FOR AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION (PROBABLY MEXICO) JAN 3, FOLLOWING EXPULSION BY GOH IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS. THE CHILEANS HAD BEEN

GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM FOLLOWING THE MILITARY COUP AGAINST ALLENDE AND SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL MOST HAD BEEN EMPLOYED BY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, WHILE SEVERAL HAD BEEN WORKING FOR THE NATIONAL AGRARIAN INSTITUTE (INA). THE GOH ALLEGES THAT THE EXPULSION IS A PURELY LEGAL MATTER RESULTING FROM THE VIOLATION OF THEIR LEGAL STATUS BY TAKING EMPLOYMENT.

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2. THE EXPULSION WAS INEPTLY HANDLED AND HAS RESULTED IN

PRESS CRITICISM AND CENSURE BY STUDENTS AND LEFTIST FRONTS. PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT THE INDIVIDUALS WERE TOLD TO REPORT TO THE OFFICES OF IMMIGRATION ON DECEMBER 31. WHEN ALL WERE PRESENT THEY WERE LOADED INTO CARS AND DRIVEN TO THE SALVADORAN FRONTIER. THEY HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE GOH HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEM TO BE RECEIVED BY THE GOES AND THAT THEY COULD PROCEED TO SAN SALVADOR, RECEIVE PASSPORTS FROM THE CHILEAN EMBASSY AND RETURN TO HONDURAS WITH PROPER DOCUMENTATION. (THEY HAD LEFT CHILE WITH HONDURAN DOCUMENTS.) THEY HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IN CASE EL SALVADOR REFUSED ENTRY, THEY WOULD BE DRIVEN TO THE NICARAGUAN BORDER.

3. UPON CROSSING THE BRIDGE TO ELSALVADOR, THEY WERE REFUSED ENTRY AND WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THE HONDURAN SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, THEY WERE TOLD THAT THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENTER HONDURAS AND CONTINUE TO NICARAGUA IF THEY SIGNED STATEMENTS ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR ILLEGAL STATUS. THIS THEY REFUSED TO DO AND REMAINED CAMPED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE FOR 17 HOURS WITH SOLDIERS GUARDING EITHER END.

4. WHAT FOLLOWED NEXT IS CONFUSED BUT THE GROUP WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO TEGUCIGALPA AND GIVEN A 72 HOUR PERIOD TO RESOLVE THEIR AFFAIRS AND LEAVE. EL DIA CREDITS CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ WITH GRANTING THE 72 HOUR EXTENSION. THE CHILEANS DEPARTED TEGUCIGALPA BY AIR ON JANUARY 3 AND WERE SENT ON THEIR WAY BY A SIZEABLE CROWD. HANDOUTS WERE DISTRIBUTED FROM THE HONDURAN COMMITTEE OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE CHILEAN PEOPLE ENTITLED, "CHRONOLOGY OF A KIDNAPPING: THE CASE OF THE CHILEAN EXILES."

5. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND GOH MOTIVATION FOR THIS REMARKABLY INEPT EPISODE, PARTICULARLY IF THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION ACTUALLY INTENDS TO PERMIT THE CHILEANS TO RETURN WHEN THEY HAVE PROPER DOCUMENTATION. THE RECTOR OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, JORGE ARTURO REINA, CLAIMS TO HAVE IN UNIVERSITY FILES WORK PERMITS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND CONCLUDES THAT THE WHOLE EPISODE IS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. GIVEN THE DEGREE OF OPPOSITION TO THE CHILEAN EXILES IN SOME QUARTERS OF THE HONDURAN ARMED

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FORCES, IT IS LIKELY THAT LOPEZ, IN ALLOWING THE EXPULSION, WAS RESPONDING TO PRESSURE FROM HIS OFFICERS. IF LOPEZ INTENDED THE EXPULSIONS TO BE PERMANENT, HE MAY NOW HAVE TO ALLOW REENTRY ON THE BASIS OF GOH ASSURANCES THAT THE EPISODE MERELY RESULTED FROM NORMAL HONDURAN LEGAL PROCESS.

6 EL DIA OF JANUARY 3 QUOTES SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL NEWS-PAPERS AS HAVING CONDEMNED THE GOH ACTION AS ARBITRARY AND

A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE NEWSPAPER SAYS THAT MEXICO, VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, CANADA AND GERMANY HAVE OFFERED TO ACCEPT THE GROUP. LOCAL CRITICISM IS BASED ON THE ARBITRARY NATURE OF THE ACT. THE REFUGEES WERE GIVEN NO NOTICE OF WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE UNAWARE OF THEIR WHEREABOUTS. THE HONDURAN COMMITTEE OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE CHILEAN PEOPLE LITERATURE SPECULATES THAT THE EXPULSION MIGHT HAVE BEEN RELATED TO ACTIONS OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT OR TO THE RECENT TERRORIST EPISODE IN MANAGUA.
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